Textual Analysis and Reinterpretation of Ellison's "Flying Home"

—— Identification and Tabulation of Linguistic Features ——

「フライングホーム」（Ellison）のテクスト分析と再考

－言語学的要素一覧－

Karen Lupardus

カレン・ルパーダス

要　旨

本稿は、ラルフ・エリソンの短編、"Flying Home" を言語学的に分析する。特に、物語の全体的な構成、特徴的な印刷上のフォーマット、独特な文法構造と語彙に焦点をあてる。作品の最初と最後のパラグラフを詳細に比較し、著名な批評家によるエリソンの作品解釈との違いを明示する。付録として、物語の大要、分析の手順、本作品に見られる死のイメージ表現一覧を付す。

This article concerns the application of linguistic analytical procedures for the purpose of undertaking a critical reading of published literary text. The text selected for analysis here is Ralph Ellison's short story "Flying Home" as it appears in the 1996 collection edited by John F. Callahan, Flying Home and Other Stories; page numbers here refer to that source, unless indicated otherwise. However, the literary interpretation introduced and supported here is in conflict with established interpretations, specifically that presented by Callahan (1996) in his "Introduction" and that offered by Robert O'Meally within his biographical and critical article titled "Ralph Ellison," which is the longest entry in the 1991 reference collection African American Writers.

This article is essentially a working paper which presents the results of analysis along with supportive discussion. Ellison's story is treated as a linguistic corpus, which is processed according to established linguistic procedures involving identification of significant elements and their contextual relationships; tabulation of those elements and relationships provides the data which is then used as the basis and support for a cohesive interpretation of that text. Within this article, emphasis is indicated by underlining selected words or phrases; the expression "emphasis added" will not be given. (No underlining occurs in Ellison's "Flying Home;" however, as will be discussed here later, Ellison does use italics for the purpose of emphasis.)

Support, in terms of detailed analysis, is presented here but the reader is advised to refer to the accompanying appendices and, if possible, to Ellison's story, while reading the text of this article. The procedures for the analysis undertaken here are those given in detail in Lupardus 2002, which used the same principles of analysis applied to a short story by Hawthorne. Briefly the procedure used is comprised of the following: (1) establishment of an indexical framework for the story, with attention given to typographical and format features, (2) syntactic, semantic, and distributional analysis of pronouns and names and other recurrent (or, by contrast, isolated) lexical items, with consideration given to recurrent or unique syntactic structures, and (3) close comparison of the opening and closing paragraphs.

I. Interpretations of "Flying Home"

Both Callahan and O'Meally assert that "Flying Home" ends with the protagonist Todd being rescued and borne away from danger by Jefferson. O'Meally claims that from Jefferson, Todd "learns to laugh at the fact that his brightest and loftiest hopes may at last be grounded by jimcrow birds" and that "in the end Todd is freer of illusions; he is more shrewd and wary" (114). Quoting from the last paragraph of Ellison's story, O'Meally writes,

> As he is carried from the field by Jefferson and Jefferson's son, it is "as though he had been lifted out of his isolation, back into the world of men. A new current of communication flowed between the man and boy and himself." (114; Ellison, 172)

This quoted interpretation of O'Meally's is particularly revealing for two reasons. As for one, O'Meally

quotes yet ignores the conditional phrase "as though," a phrase that implies a contrary-to-fact condition: Todd only seems to have been lifted from his isolation and returned to the world of men. As for the other, O'Meally's reference to "Jefferson's son" reveals an inattentive reading of the text and reliance on unsupported assumptions either of his own or of others: nowhere in the text is the boy Ted identified specifically as Jefferson's son. Ted may just as well be Jefferson's grandson or nephew or even simply a helper. O'Meally is similarly incautious in his assertion that through his acquaintance with Jefferson, Todd has become "more...wary." As evidence of that failure of O'Meally's, it may be noted that although Ellison uses the related expression "warily," it is only at the very beginning of the story, within the first twenty lines in the clause "He [Todd] watched them [Jefferson and Ted] warily" (148). The story's last full nominal reference to Todd, twenty-six lines from the closing of the story, is the one-sentence paragraph, "Todd was beyond it now, lost in a world of anguish." That descriptive sentence, along with the previously quoted clause beginning with the phrase "as though," which appears ten lines from the end of the story, hardly suggests that Todd has become at all "shrewd and wary" through the course of the story.

Although I will not argue against the interpretation that the interaction between Todd and Jefferson is instrumental in bringing about Todd's acceptance of himself as a black man, I do reject the unproblematic acceptance of Jefferson as someone who rescues Todd from danger when he carries Todd off on a stretcher. My own reading of Ellison's story, supported here by methodological linguistic analysis, provides the basis of an entirely different interpretation: if the story were a stage production, the audience would understand that the protagonist Todd was likely to be killed after being carried off on a stretcher into the wings at the end of the final act. However, whether Jefferson is instrumental or accessory to the death of Todd is not determinable from the text, but is left as "reader's choice." Nonetheless there is substantial evidence in the text that Todd is not likely to be "saved" from death, and certainly not by Jefferson.

In the following sections of this paper, my primary purpose is to demonstrate the means by which Ellison prepares the reader to anticipate a violent end to Todd's life. I will not, however, enter into discussion of authorial intention: whether Ellison consciously or unconsciously crafted his writing with inclusion of foreshadowing of Todd's death is, in my opinion, strictly of biographic interest and has no bearing on the evidence of the text at hand.

Ambiguity and duality, and Todd's developing awareness of the coexistence of good and evil, may be seen as a major theme of this story, but as will be seen, the story "Flying Home" is perhaps not so much a story of Todd's struggle with himself as it is that of a struggle between two men--with Jefferson coming out holding the winning hand. The struggle between those two men can be taken metaphorically as a struggle between the older, agrarian world view and that of the younger, technologically centered world view. The short story also functions as a parable showing how the strength of Todd's self-awareness and concern for his own appearance and "his need to measure

himself against the mirror of other men's appreciation" is such as to blind him from recognizing the abilities of Jefferson, another black man whose virtues pass unseen. Moreover, it is also a story of another kind of misattribution: Todd seeks acknowledgement of his manliness and expects to find that only within some future confrontation with an enemy, whom he mistakenly assumes will be the Germans. On the one hand, Todd fails to accept and value the recognition of his unnamed "girl," believing instead that only the appreciation of men is of value; on the other hand, the respect and acknowledgement that Todd seeks is not granted by his officers or by the Germans but instead by Graves, who is the one who pointedly refers to him as an "eagle."

II. Analysis of some format features of the text

1. Basic structure—a one-act play with four scenes

Briefly put, the method used here requires multiple readings of the text and painstaking inventory and tabulation of the linguistic features of that text. The result of that statistical analysis of linguistic features is then articulated as support for the structural and interpretive analyses given here.

For the most part, except for Todd's flashbacks and the tall tale related by Jefferson, the entire story takes place in one setting, from noon to evening in an open field on a hot day in rural Alabama. In structure it follows an Aristotelian prescription, limited by time, place, and action, with Jefferson playing, in a sense, the role of the interpretive chorus that provides the viewer (reader) with expectation of the protagonist's fate. However, the story is told entirely through the perceptions of Todd, a young black man who is in Alabama, training to be a pilot in preparation for fighting in the Second World War (though as yet Negroes had not been allowed to fly in combat).

The structure of the story is such that it can be readily divided into four sections or scenes, though not of equal length, the scenes being marked by the appearance, or absence, of various players. On the basis of the role of key persons involved, I have assigned those four sections the following titles: (1) Opening, (2) Jefferson, (3) Todd, and (4) Graves. Analysis of the story is organized here according to reference to those major divisions. Appendix One provides a summary of the story, organized by sections, with page and line numbers, and listing of persons involved or referenced, and Appendix Two provides a brief overview of procedures.

2. Dialogue and non-dialogue paragraphs

In the text of "Flying Home," there are slightly more than two hundred "paragraphs," each of which can be classified as either dialogue (beginning with quotation marks) or non-dialogue. Result of investigation of the occurrence of lexical items, recurrent syntactic structures, and the appearance of italics is enhanced by recognition of the existence of two basic types of paragraphs. Investigation of features of these paragraphs provides evidence for changes in the relative dominance of the two main

actors, Todd and Jefferson, and opens the door to interpretation of their relationship. Understanding of the function of names is also improved by recognition of the paragraph-context of their occurrence.

Approximately sixty percent of the nearly eight hundred lines of text are in non-dialogue paragraphs. (The 134 lines of the italicized Section 3, seventy percent of which are non-dialogue, are not under consideration in the following remarks, except where noted). Although nine of the non-dialogue paragraphs terminate in a dialogue entry, all except for one two-line paragraph are nonetheless dominantly non-dialogue. Excepting Section 3, the story contains sixty-nine non-dialogue paragraphs, varying in length from one line to 40 lines, and almost twice as many paragraphs of dialogue, the dialogue entries varying from a one-word "Yes" or "No" to paragraphs as long a fourteen lines. Only nine of the sixty-nine non-dialogue paragraphs contain more than a dozen lines.

As for dialogue dominance (again excepting italicized Section 3, and some dialogue entries embedded in prose paragraphs), Todd has approximately 50 dialogue entries, while Jefferson can claim over 70. The boy Teddy speaks three times, Graves speaks five times, and one or the other of the two attendants speaks five times. The words of three females are given, but only within Todd's memory, the first instance being the words in his girlfriend's letter, and the other being in dialogues between Todd and his mother, first within Todd's italicized flashback, and the other near the end of the story within another flashback. On the whole, the non-dialogue paragraphs tend to be longer than the dialogue paragraphs. Moreover, though Jefferson dominates the dialogue, the non-dialogue paragraphs articulate Todd's thoughts and perceptions.

In terms of a structural analysis of the text, the distribution and features of non-dialogue paragraphs appear to be most significant. In particular, it is noteworthy that the longest paragraph in the story occurs in Section 4, just before the appearance of Graves and the climactic confrontation of Todd and Graves. That forty-line paragraph is formatted as one unit but is thematically in two parts and could well have been composed as two, or three, paragraphs rather than one. The fact that it is one, long paragraph (with a bi-part structure) should not be overlooked, but it is beyond the scope of this brief article to do much more than to note that both parts present an image of ambiguity: the subject matter (Jefferson in the first part and airplanes in the second) is presented both positively and negatively. The dual structure of the paragraph reflects Todd's delirium but also his achievement of an awareness of the encompassing duality of positive and negative features. That is, within each of those two parts of the paragraph there is a further dichotomization: Jefferson is presented as being jolly but also as being detached and potentially destructive; similarly the airplane is presented as being alluring yet horrifying for its potential for harmful use. This dualism occurs in a number of other phrases in the story, such as "black and white" in the opening paragraph, "loathing and admiration" (Sect. 2, 156), "rich or poor" (Sect. 3, 162), and in Section 4 pairs such as "a terrible horror and a horrible fascination" (170), "white folks or niggers" (171), "dead or alive" (172), and "realizing and doubting" (172).

It is noteworthy also that each of the four sections boasts one, and only one, overly long

paragraph (27, 38, 36, and 40 lines, respectively). All other non-dialogue paragraphs are fewer than twenty lines in length, only six of which have more than a dozen lines. Those six paragraphs appear in Sections 2, 3, and 4, two such paragraphs for each of those three sections, the combined line number of each pair amounting to 31 to 32 lines (18 & 13, 17 & 14, and 17 & 15, respectively). Section 1 has one twelve-line non-dialogue paragraph. There are exactly three ten-line non-dialogue paragraphs, one being the opening paragraph of Section 1, and the other two being in Section 2. All three ten-line paragraphs notably contain italicized sentences.

There are only eight one-line non-dialogue paragraphs. The first one closes Section 1. In Section 2, which occupies pages 151 through 162, there is one one-line non-dialogue paragraph on each of four pages, 155 through 158. Thus the first four and last four pages of Section 2 are without such one-line non-dialogue paragraphs. Section 4 has three such paragraphs and there are some important points to be considered with regard to those three one-line paragraphs:

Jefferson looked at him quickly. (167)

They drew back surprised. (171)

Todd was beyond it now, lost in a world of anguish. (172)

Noteworthy is the fact that the first of those three one-line paragraphs is also the story's very first occurrence of a paragraph beginning with the name Jefferson (as compared to nearly a dozen paragraphs beginning with the name Todd), while the last of those three one-line paragraphs is also the last appearance of the name Todd. This matter of occurrence and distribution of names will be considered later, yet it is valuable to mention here that the first appearance of the name Jefferson in Section 4 occurs three lines before the paragraph-initial occurrence of the name Jefferson on page 167. That first occurrence positions the name Jefferson mid-line, immediately following the name Mister Graves. Subsequently, the name full name Dabney Graves appears twice before the name Todd appears in Section 4 for the first time, on the 35th line, at the top of page 168 in the two-line sentence:

Todd had the sensation of being caught in a white neighborhood after dark.

The name Todd begins another short non-dialogue paragraph near the bottom of that page, and does not again begin a paragraph until after the appearance of Graves. On page 171, building up to the climax of the story, the name Todd begins three non-dialogue paragraphs in succession, inserted into and separated by dialogue between Graves and the attendants. Following Todd's climactic laughter, the name Todd begins the last one-line non-dialogue paragraph (page 172, quoted earlier); the very next paragraph is a dialogue paragraph beginning with the name "Jeff" as spoken by Graves, and the paragraph after that is a non-dialogue paragraph beginning with the name Jefferson. (The name Todd begins five non-dialogue paragraphs in Section 2, on pages 153, 158, 160, 161, and 162.)

Although this brief discussion of names is somewhat digressional, and more is to be said here later on that topic, it is important to recognize that the combined occurrence of names and variations in the distribution of different types and sizes of paragraph, contributes significantly to the overall

structure and rhythm of the story.

As for the nine non-dialogue paragraphs that end with spoken words in quotation marks, a few remarks are best given here. To begin, there is only one such paragraph in Section 1, all others occurring in Section 2. The one in Section 1 is a two-line paragraph that ends with the first words Todd actually speaks, in this case addressed to Jefferson. In Section 2, the first such paragraph is the only instance of Todd's actually speaking to himself audibly, with the words given within quotation marks. It is also the first non-dialogue paragraph in Section 2, within which Todd is reported to come to the realization that he feels "naked" without his plane. That paragraph, which is placed immediately before the 38-line, longest non-dialogue paragraph in that section, ends with the following sentence.

> And with a sudden embarrassment and wonder he whispered, "It's the only dignity I have...." (151)

The root-word "embarrass" is introduced to the story in that sentence. In the very next paragraph, that word appears in the syntactically ambiguous clause "they came to embarrass and shame him" (152; the verb "came" can be paraphrased as "arrived (in order)" or as "began"), and the word appears for the last time near the end of Section 2 in the following, important three-line non-dialogue paragraph:

> He [Todd] saw him [Jefferson] through a blur, smiling. And for a second he felt the embarrassed silence of understanding flutter between them. (162)

As for the seven remaining dialogue-terminal "non-dialogue" paragraphs, they are distributed between the pages 153 and 161 such that the first four are well-separated and non-adjacent, but the last three dialogue-terminal paragraphs occur in close proximity at the structural midpoint of the story (and are the first non-dialogue paragraphs after the line-count midpoint of the story). Those paragraphs are presented in their entirely below.

> At the burst of laughter, Todd felt such an intense humiliation that only great violence would wash it away. The laughter which shook the old man like a boiling purge set up vibrations of guilt within him which not even the intricate machinery of the plane would have been adequate to transform and he heard himself screaming, "Why do you laugh at me this way?"
>
> He hated himself at that moment, but he had lost control. He saw Jefferson's mouth fall open. "What—?"
>
> "Answer me!"
>
> His blood pounded as though it would surely burst his temples, and he tried to reach the old man and fell, screaming, "Can I help it because they won't let us actually fly? Maybe we are a bunch of buzzards feeding on a dead horse, but we can hope to be eagles, can't we? *Can't we?* "

As can be seen in the above series of dialogue-terminal paragraphs, the sequence of speakers is Todd, Jefferson, Todd. The previous speakers indicated in the previous six dialogue-terminal paragraphs, using here the initials "T" and "J," are: T,T,T, J,J,J. The following is the completed series of nine

dialogue-terminal paragraphs, presented here with initial letters to represent speakers and slashes to indicate intervening non-dialogue paragraphs (a hyphen separates the final such paragraph from the preceding one because there is no intervening non-dialogue paragraph, though there is a two-word dialogue-paragraph in that location).

T/////////T//////T//J////J//J/////TJ-T

Such a rhythmic series is reminiscent of poetry and music and provides additional evidence of the importance of non-dialogue sentences in the structure of "Flying Home."

3. *The function of italics*

Apparently italics are used in "Flying Home" for three distinct functions. The first to occur is the function of indicating *intrusion* of thoughts or words, the second is to indicate *emphasis*, and the third is to indicate *isolation* (Todd's extended, delirium-induced childhood recollection).

Occurrence of the first two functions is found in Section 1. The opening paragraph describes Todd's perceptions and feelings in third-person form, with two utterances given in dialect and in italics but unidentified for source (though it is probably Teddy and Jefferson, in that order). Later in the longest non-dialogue paragraph in that section, the sentence-initial word "now" is in italics (*Now* the humiliation would come; 150). Emphasis on the temporal adverb puts focus on that sentence, which contains the content word "humiliation," a word which appears five times within that paragraph (twice in sentence-terminal position) as expression of Todd's thoughts, while the form "humiliating" appears once within that paragraph as the last word recollected and quoted from "[Todd's] girl's last letter." The word "humiliation" occurs only three more times in the story, once in each of the non-dialogue paragraphs that immediately precede and immediately follow the line-count midpoint of the story (on page 160, Section 2), and again in sentence-terminal position within the 18-line climactic paragraph near the end of Section 4.

Italics in Section 2 occurs three times in the function of intrusion, and six times in the function of emphasis, all but the last incidence of emphasis being one-word emphasis. In both cases of intrusion, full sentences are italicized. The first and last occurrences are instances of Jefferson's spoken words intruding into Todd's unspoken thoughts (156, 159), whereas the second occurrence is an instance of Todd's unspoken thoughts intruding into his reception of Jefferson's spoken words (157).

Although the italicized one-word emphasis in Section 1 was attributed to Todd (in a non-dialogue paragraph), in Section 2 all instances of one-word emphasis are attributed to Jefferson (in dialogue paragraphs). The first three appear on page 157 (*me, you, seen*) and the last two on pages 158 (*they*) and 159 (*one*), separated by the last full-sentence intrusion (159).

It is noteworthy that three of the five emphasized words are personal pronouns, the first two of which appear in separate paragraphs on page 156. Syntactically, the emphasized first-person pronoun is in the accusative case (referring to Jefferson), the direct object of the verb "scared," the grammatical subject of that verb being the second-person singular pronoun "you." The emphasized pronoun "you,"

which occurs five paragraphs later (in the same paragraph as the emphasized "seen"), is the grammatical subject of the stative verb "come." However, in terms of semantic, or case-grammar, analysis, both "me" and "you" can be analyzed as patients of the respective verbs "scare" and "come," functionally quite distinct from the italicized pronoun "they" (other black angels) which occurs as the agent of the verb "fly" on page 158.

A couple of observations can be made concerning the following words, which terminate the lower-most dialogue paragraph on page 154 (the only paragraph with emphasis on two, isolated words).

> ...but I haven't never *seen* one o' you all. Caint tell you how it felt to see somebody what look like me in a airplane!

First, as a matter of interpretation, the reader might well wonder just what Jefferson actually felt, especially in view of his remark, two pages later, that "white folk round here" don't like to see "you boys up there in the sky." When Todd asks Jefferson how he knows that, Jefferson only replies "I just know." Second, the double emphasis (*you* and *seen*) in that paragraph puts added weight to that paragraph wherein Jefferson tells Todd that there is a man loose who is "liable to kill somebody." Third, that paragraph begins with Jefferson echoing Todd's question about why Jefferson was "worked up" over the news that people were looking for Mister Rudolph, the cousin of Mister Graves. That is, immediately preceding the doubly emphasized paragraph, there is a one-word dialogue question from Todd, "Why?" Immediately below that word is the first word of Jefferson's response, "Why?" followed by the explanation "'Cause he done broke outa the crazy house, that's why." It is my opinion that the echoed interrogative pronoun is not necessary but is placed there to put further weight on that paragraph. The nearest equivalent to such repetition or echoing occurs in Section 3 (165) when the boy Todd's one-line dialogue entry "The airplane..." (ellipsis present in the original) is followed by his mother's echoed question, "Airplane?" Finally the fourth point to be made concerns the sequence "*seen* one": although the next word to be emphasized by Jefferson is the pronoun "they" (158), the last word to be emphasized is the limiting adjective "one" in the expression that Jefferson attributes to Saint Peter, "You wasn't flyin' with but *one* wing?" (159).

Restrictions on space prohibit me from presenting a deeper investigation of that word "one," which can also, in other contexts, function as an indefinite pronoun, but it is nonetheless worth making a final interpretive remark about the linguistic sequence of single, italicized words. However, before doing so, it is necessary to identify the last two instances of italics used in "Flying Home."

The last instance of italics in Section 2 is in the words of Todd. Although what is italicized is a full sentence, this one differs from those that exhibit the intrusive function of usage of italics. In this case the words "Can't we?" are an echo of the grammatical tag on the preceding sentence (the full text is presented here on page XX). Emphasis in this case draws attention to Todd's "hope to be eagles." Presumably the first-person plural pronoun refers to Todd and the other black pilots, but it can also be interpreted as referring to all black people, and therefore might be Todd's first inclusion of Jefferson.

The final instance of usage of italics, outside of Section 3, which is entirely in italics, occurs as the first line of Section 4, a two-word utterance spoken by Jefferson, "*Hey, son!*" (No other italics occur in Section 4.) What is distinctive is that the words are not only in italics but also in quotes. It is not clear why, in this instance of intrusion, where Jefferson's words break into Todd's delirium, it is necessary to use both quotation marks and italics, since the intervening blank line suggests adequate separation. However, it is possible that the usage of quoted italics, similar to what appeared in Section 3, indicates that for a moment Todd could not distinguish the external words from the words in his dream. Such an interpretation is supported by the following non-dialogue paragraph that begins with "At first he did not know where he was...." Another interpretation, however, is that Jefferson's words "*Hey, son!*" not only intrude into Todd's consciousness, they also seal off and terminate his story. It is notable that the next instance of Todd's coming out of semi-consciousness is the only instance where Jefferson is not at that moment pointedly addressing Todd: that final instance of return from semi-consciousness occurs in the first line of the non-dialogue paragraph which follows the story's longest paragraph. The words there are "Jefferson was calling," but it is not clear whether Jefferson was addressing Todd or calling to the arriving men.

Now, as for the Section 2 sequence of italicized words, mostly pronouns, they may be analyzed both phonologically and semantically. The sequence produced by Jefferson is:

me, you, seen, they, one.

If we add to that sequence, the final personal pronoun "we" (spoken by Todd), the sequence will be:

me, you, seen, they, one, we.

There are a number of patterns to be observed. First, only two words are not personal pronouns, and both of those words terminate in a nasal consonant; the personal pronouns all terminate in tense vowels (which are phonetically diphthongs). It is interesting to note that the word "seen" functions as a pivot, separating the singular pronouns (me, you) from the plural pronouns (they, we), the plural pronouns being further separated by the intrusive "one." Furthermore, it is the white angel Saint Peter, with the power to take away wings (if not grant them) who is the source for that divisionary "one," without which the "they" (black angels) would not be separated from the "we" (black pilots or black people). Further poetic or musical patterns can be found within this series of five or six words, and even more if the pronoun "son" that opens Section 4 is added, but analysis of this will stop here. (The kin term "son" can be treated here as a pronoun.)

As we have seen, a fuller understanding of the distinctive function of italics in this story is increased by making a thorough study of the usage of pronouns, which is touched on briefly in the next subsection here.

III. Some lexical features of the text

Although the analysis undertaken here included investigation of numerous lexical categories,

including body-part terms, body fluids, color terminology, expressions of perspective, etc., all of which contributed to insightful findings, limitations of space necessitate restriction here to two principal categories: personal pronouns and non-locative proper nouns.

1. Shifting pronominal reference

The story "Flying Home" is presented from the perspective of the protagonist, Todd, and it is told mostly in third person, though occasionally Todd's thoughts are expressed in the first- or second-person form. However, as already mentioned, the italicized Section 3 is an extended flashback of Todd's, told entirely from a first-person perspective, the only third-person pronouns referring to someone other than Todd.

The shift from third- to first-person, or second-person, in the non-dialogue paragraphs is clearly not random or accidental, and does not appear to be done for the purpose of disambiguating the structure of the paragraph. Rather, as the following discussion will show, the variation reveals Todd's struggle for self-assertion. By my count, in the non-dialogue paragraphs that exhibit pronominal shift, there are a total of 20 first-person pronouns and 17 second-person pronouns, the shift to second person usually occurring in the context of Todd's criticizing himself. As the story progresses, and as Todd weakens (or as he learns, depending on the interpretation of the story), non-dialogue references to Todd become increasingly a distancing third person. Twelve of 69 non-dialogue paragraphs exhibit pronominal shift, 14 percent of those in Section 1, 23 percent of those in Section 2 (30 percent of the pre-midpoint paragraphs in that section, but none of the post-midpoint sections), and ten percent of the non-dialogue paragraphs in Section 4.

Early in the story, there is relatively frequent shift in pronominal reference, often without presence of phrases such as "he thought." The first such shift occurs near the bottom of the third page of the story.

> Of all the luck, he thought. Of all the rotten luck, now I have done it. The fumes of high-octane gasoline clung in the heat, taunting him. (149)

As can be seen, the shift moves from third to first and back to third. In the very next paragraph, the longest paragraph in the first section, the last five lines are as follows (here the two third-person pronouns refer to Jefferson).

> Yes, and humiliation was when you could never be simply yourself; when you were always a part of this old black ignorant man. Sure, he's all right. Nice and kind and helpful. But he's not you. Well, there's one humiliation I can spare myself. (150)

Excluding the internally-quoted letter, this long paragraph began with seven third-person references to Todd, shifted to nine second-person references (initially perhaps impersonal, but gradually becoming more personal), and ended with first-person reference.

The paragraph with the greatest indication of pronominal shift is the first non-dialogue paragraph in Section 2, a 17-line paragraph in which Todd, now alone with Jefferson, considers his

situation and comes to realize that the plane is his only dignity. In that paragraph the pronominal shift cyclically vacillates from third to first three times before moving on to second person and then returning to third person again only to end with Todd's whispered reference to himself in first person. That paragraph is followed by the section's longest paragraph, within which pronominal reference to Todd vacillates between third and first person for nearly half of the paragraph (of the first 19 pronouns, five are first person); after Todd's reference to himself as "Negro," however, the remaining 20 pronominal references are all third person. Six more of the 35 non-dialog paragraphs of Section 2 exhibit pronominal shift in reference to Todd, though none of the eight non-dialogue paragraphs that follow the line-count midpoint exhibit pronominal shift.

Section 4, with twenty non-dialogue paragraphs, is particularly revealing. The last instance of pronominal shift occurs at the very beginning of the longest paragraph, the paragraph that has already been identified here as bi-partite. The initial two sentences, which contain the only such shifts in that paragraph, are as follows:

> If my ankle would only ease for a while, he thought. The closer I spin toward the earth the blacker I become, flashed through his mind. (168-9)

Prior to that paragraph, in a short paragraph that describes Todd's response to Jefferson's explanation of why he stayed, there was a similar pronominal shift:

> He turned away from Jefferson's eyes, at once consoled and accused. And I'll have to come by them soon, he thought with despair. Closing his eyes, he heard Jefferson's voice as the sun burned blood-red upon his lids. (168)

Unlike many of the shifts in Sections 1 and 2, all the shifts in Section 4 follow established rules for direct speech, except that they are without usage of quotation marks.

Perhaps the most significant pronominal shift, however, occurs on page 167, near the beginning of Section 4, after Todd is awakened by Jefferson, who points out that there is an airplane approaching in the distance. The following one-line dialogue paragraph is noteworthy because the author does not specify that the words Todd "heard" were actually spoken by Jefferson.

> "You think he sees us?" he heard.

Eight lines later, after being told that the plane has curved away, there is a significant three-line paragraph:

> "Maybe he saw us," he said. "Maybe he's gone to send out the ambulance and ground crew." And, he thought with despair, maybe he didn't even see us."

This is Todd's first unambiguous usage of the first person plural pronoun, which here clearly includes both Todd and Jefferson. However, immediately afterwards the exchange between the two men reveals to Todd the danger of his situation. At the top of page 168 is an important two-line paragraph:

> Todd had the sensation of being caught in a white neighborhood after dark.

Subsequently Todd begins to recognize the "thread of detachment" in Jefferson's voice:

It was as though he [Jefferson] held his words at arm's length before him to avoid their destructive meaning. (168)

That expression of uncertainty and doubt, and the recognition of the dual nature of Jefferson, is presented in the section's longest paragraph with its imagery of two Jeffersons: "A little black Jefferson" and "the other Jefferson [who] looked on with detachment." The repetition of the modifier in the expressions "a little black man, another Jefferson! A little black Jefferson..." puts emphasis on the laughing Jefferson who is black...but the modifier "black" does not co-occur with reference to the Jefferson who looks on with "detachment."

2. *Shifting dominance of names*

Though much can be said about the significance of the names, discussion here will be limited mostly to distribution and frequency of occurrence. Such a structural investigation of occurrence of the names clearly demonstrates that Jefferson slowly overpowers Todd, at least in terms of full-noun reference. The name Todd occurs 5 times in the opening sections, 14 times in the section labeled here "Jefferson," not even once in the section labeled here "Todd," and 8 times in the final section, labeled here "Graves." By contrast, the name Jefferson does not appear until the second section, where it occurs 12 times, including the three shortened forms "Jeff" as spoken by Saint Peter, and 19 times in the final section, including two times in the shortened form "Jeff" as spoken by Graves. In total, the name Todd occurs 27 times in contrast with 26 occurrences of "Jefferson" and five occurrences of "Jeff." Although neither name occurs in the third section, it is clear that the name Todd loses dominance in the duration of the story while the name Jefferson gains dominance, the Todd: Jeff(erson) ratio being 5:0, 14:12, 8:19, respectively for the other three sections.

In the italicized section of the story, which is a flashback of Todd's childhood, there is no mention of Todd's name. Rather, his mother calls him only "boy" and "chile." By contrast, in her last letter (as remembered by Todd), his girl repeatedly addresses him by his name—three times in the space of eight lines. In no other paragraph does the name Todd appear more than once. Although the name Jefferson does not appear until late in the story, it occurs as many as six times in one paragraph (169; the longest paragraph in the story). The shortened form "Jeff," as spoken by Saint Peter (160, in the story told by Jefferson), occurs three times in one paragraph, and later it occurs twice as spoken by Graves, first in referential usage and subsequently as an address form.

Teddy is addressed by name, both by Jefferson and by Graves. Teddy's relationship to Jefferson is never made explicit. Mister Graves is addressed as such by one or both of the attendants and by Jefferson. But no one (except in the quoted letter from his girl) addresses Todd by name, nor does Todd address anyone else by name. In fact, Todd never even refers to anyone by name--not the participants, not his relatives, not even his girl. For Todd they are all nameless, identified either pronominally or by relation to Todd himself. It is indeed intriguing that despite spending the entire afternoon together, Todd and Jefferson do not exchange names, though the topic of names does occur—

in the context of Jefferson's talking about buzzards. When Jefferson says that Teddy calls buzzards "jimcrows," Todd remarks "It's a damned good name" (155)—but Todd continues to think of them instead as buzzards (157, 161, 173).

IV. Consideration of the opening and closing paragraphs

Much of the story is distilled and condensed in the opening and closing paragraphs. As already mentioned, the name Todd occurs in the opening paragraph, whereas the name Jefferson appears in the closing paragraph. Several expressions occur in both paragraphs: suspended, sun, heard, seize[d], hand[s], face. All third-person pronouns in both paragraphs refer to Todd (both paragraphs have eight in the nominative and three in the accusative; the genitive appears three times in the opening and four times in the closing, which also has one instance of the reflexive). However, the final paragraph, with its ominous thirteen lines, is three lines longer than the opening paragraph.

There are also a number of differences, most particularly inversions or oppositions. In the opening paragraph, the longest sentence is the first one (29 words, while in the closing paragraph, the longest sentence is the final sentence (30 words)—one word longer than the opening sentence.

Several points need to be made here. First of all, in the opening paragraph only the name Todd is given; the old man and the boy are not referred to by name or description—only their spoken words are given. However, a key point here (in particular, following the preceding discussion of pronouns) is that the only first-person pronoun in that opening paragraph quite likely was spoken by Jefferson. Jefferson himself, however, is the last person to be identified by name in the story (though the addition of the given name Dabney is not provided for Mister Graves until the last section of the story). It is significant that the name Jefferson does not appear until page 158, scarcely two pages shy of the mid-point. Moreover, excepting for the name Todd, which is introduced by the narrator, and the name of one of the oxen, Ned (which is introduced by the boy), all the names given in the story are introduced by Jefferson. That is, Jefferson has the power of giving names—at least to people.

As mentioned previously, Todd actually never uses any names at all, except to call his mother "Mama." Most importantly, unlike Jefferson, he never even uses his own name to identify himself, so the old man must persist in addressing Todd as "son"—a sort of "sir" with a nasal ending; however, "sir" is usually said to a superior, while "son" is said to an inferior.

The name Todd appears for the first time as the second word in the opening paragraph. All other references to Todd being pronominal, and all phonetically distinct, linguistic forms of the third-person pronoun are used there, except the reflexive (which, however, does appear in the final paragraph). Those personal pronouns are presented in a balanced, rather poetic sequence: he, he, his, his, him, his, him, he. It is notable that the sequence reveals an attenuation, and ultimate isolation, of the agentive pronoun, which appears as: "he saw....He stirred....he thought," the "action" of thinking being the most invisible and least observable to others. The genitive pronoun appears in the following

contexts and sequence: "his whole body...his eyes....his head." It is notable that only the body parts are possessed. The body-part "hands" also appears in that paragraph; however, they are not Todd's hands but are instead "white hands." That noun phrase is in an agentive phrase in a sentence where the subject of the passive verb phrase "being touched" is unspecified (non-existent) but recognizably Todd. It is notable also, by the way, that there is no mention of legs or feet, a curious circumstance in that the source of Todd's pain is his foot.

In the final paragraph of the story, there is no mention of Todd's name, only that of Jefferson, and that, in parallel fashion, in the first line of the paragraph. The other persons are not identified by name; only the expressions "man," "men," and "boy" are used. Although all the numerous masculine third-person pronouns of that final paragraph refer to Todd (in the form and sequence, "He, him; he, his, he; he, his; himself; him; he; he, his; he, him; his, he), and the name Jefferson appears as the subject of a dependent clause, it can nonetheless be inferred (because of the full-name reference) that Jefferson has acquired more importance than Todd. (See Lupardus 2002 for discussion of the significance of nominal and pronominal reference.) On the other hand, the fact that the name Jefferson occurs within a dependent clause implies that Jefferson is himself not autonomous. The same, however, could be said of the name Todd, which appears in that opening paragraph also as the subject of a dependent clause. Of note is that that particular dependent clause functions as a temporal adverbial ("When Todd came to"). By contrast, although the closing paragraph's dependent clause "as Jefferson and the boy carried him along in silence" can also be recognized as a temporal modifier, Jefferson is conjoined with "the boy" as the active agent, while the pronominal form for Todd is but the patient of the action in that closing paragraph. Similarly, the expression "came to" in the opening paragraph is closer to the passive "was brought around" than to the active "woke up," and indeed by case-grammar analysis the function of the noun "Todd" in that sentence is that of patient rather than agent.

V. Various images, expressions, and structures that point to a dark ending

Although critics such as Callahan and O'Meally apparently prefer to have Todd "rescued" by Jefferson at the end of the story, it appears to me that there are many features that suggest that the end of the story is effectively the end of the line for Todd. One key issue is the recurrence of images of death (see Appendix Three). Another key point lies in the role of Mister Rudolph: from the moment that Jefferson first mentions him, his appearance seems to be imminent, yet he does not actually appear within the confines of the story. On the other hand, though Rudolph is said to be "crazy," the reader may well wonder whether Jefferson and/or Graves might not also be similarly crazy.

Aside from the numerous instances of foreshadowing of violence and indicators of death, listed in Appendix Three, the most undeniable is that Todd wishes to be thought of as an eagle rather than a buzzard (161); moreover, he expects to have his manhood and skill recognized only by the enemy,

and that in terms of hatred (152). His wish and expectation are realized at the end of the story when Graves says "Jeff.... I want you [and Teddy] to take this here black eagle over to that nigguh airfield and leave him." A key point in the interpretation of this story, therefore, lies in the possible metaphoric meaning of the expression "that nigguh airfield." If Graves means the final resting grounds where Negroes are buried, and from which they can begin their flight to heaven, the place where they will get their wings, then Graves is telling Jefferson and Teddy to take Todd to the cemetery...possibly even to bury him alive (wrapped in a strait jacket, he cannot dig himself out). This metaphoric reading seems plausible because of the tale that Jefferson tells of going to heaven, a tale that is preceded by Jefferson's telling Todd,

> "...I died and went to heaven ... maybe by time I tell you about it they be done come after you."(156)

One possible reading of the above sentence is that "they" means "angels." That is, by the time Jefferson finishes his story, Todd will have been "rescued"...either by mortals or by death. This ambiguity cannot be overlooked in a cohesive interpretation of this story.

Another important point is that although Callahan and O'Meally seem to expect Jefferson to "rescue" Todd, they fail to account for the many similarities and connections between Jefferson and Graves, similarities which point to Jefferson and Graves being, in a sense, two aspects or incarnations of the same "person." (Or, perhaps, Jefferson and Rudolph are both, in a sense, related to Graves.) First, it must not be forgotten that it was Jefferson who decided to send Teddy to get Graves, though later Jefferson claims that he himself does his best to stay away from Graves. Second, Jefferson's subsequent complaint that Graves is fickle might be taken as an instance of projection (as is further suggested by the dualistic image of Jefferson in Todd's delirious image of a larger and smaller Jefferson). Third, Jefferson says that Graves is a "funny fellow" who is always telling jokes, but that description also fits Jefferson, who prior to his story of heaven told Todd, "You see a lot of funny things down here, son" (156). As for specific similarities between Jefferson and Graves, first there is the matter that Graves himself calls Jefferson "Jeff," just as Jefferson claims Saint Peter does. Second, the expression "chuckled" is used only with reference to Jefferson (156, 158) and to Graves (171). Third, reference to bad teeth is also made only to Jefferson (159) and to Graves (171).

The suggestion, by Callahan and O'Meally, that there is a sympathetic link between Jefferson and Todd also seems only tenuous. There are instead repeated occurrences of Todd's feeling "tense" in the presence of Jefferson (two two-word sentences, "He tensed," p.153 and "Todd tensed, p. 162), and also reference to a "screen" coming between Todd and Jefferson (pp. 160, 162).

Finally, yet keeping in mind that our view of Jefferson is only that presented through the pain-ridden eyes of Todd, we can observe some significant inconsistencies on the part of Jefferson. Whether those inconsistencies amount to intentional and willful deception is, of course, a matter of personal judgment on the part of the reader, but the evidence itself is incontrovertible.

Specifically, in the final section of the story, Jefferson tells Todd that Graves has killed "five fellers" and then goes on to say that all the colored folk know about Dabney Graves because "he done killed enough of us." The implication is that the five who were killed were not colored. When Todd asks what those five men had done, Jefferson replies "Thought they was men." (The reader cannot forget that Todd himself wishes to be recognized as a man.) And Jefferson then added that Graves owed money to some of them, just as he owes money to Jefferson. When Todd then asks Jefferson why he doesn't leave, Jefferson first implies that Todd should know—because Todd is also black. Then Jefferson goes on to describe Graves as an unreliable person, who tells jokes, and who sometimes backs the colored people against the white people, but who also "soon as he gits tired helping a man...don't care what happens to him. He just leaves him stone-cold" (p. 168). (The reader may wonder whether, at day's end, Jefferson himself may not have become tired of helping an apparently ungrateful young Todd.) After telling Todd that Graves is the kind of person that he hates, the kind of person who will do you a favor and then "turn right around and have you strung up," Jefferson immediately remarks that as for himself, "I stays outa his way 'cause down here that's what you gotta do" (p. 168). Yet, as already mentioned here, it was Jefferson who sent Teddy to Graves, after first having told Todd "We have to get you to a doctor" (p.148) and then moments later "We gon git you a doctor" (p.149).

The following is Ellison's description of Todd listening to Jefferson explaining what kind of person Graves is.

> Todd listened to the thread of detachment in the old man's voice. It was as though he held his words at arm's length before him to avoid their destructive meaning. (p. 168)

There can hardly be a better image of the psychological self-protective mechanism known as "projection." Jefferson hates Graves because the two of them have so much in common.

In a parallel fashion, Todd feels that he is not like the old man, Jefferson.

> ...humiliation was...when you were always a part of this old black ignorant man. Sure, he's all right. Nice and kind and helpful...But he's not you. (p.150)

Those are the thoughts that Todd has when Teddy suggests that they carry Todd into town on the oxen. Todd ends those thought with the decision, " Well, there's one humiliation I can spare myself," and he then refuses the offer made by Teddy, responding "I have orders not to leave the ship...."

It is the finality of that rejection that causes Jefferson to respond simply "Aw" before turning to the boy to tell him to "hustle down to Mister Graves and get him to come." When Todd then wants to modify the instructions, to have Graves simply call the airfield, Jefferson does not support him but, it may be inferred, remains silent.

It should be noted that from the beginning Todd does not yield to Jefferson and does not recognize Jefferson's skills or Jefferson's manhood. Instead, Todd considers him to be merely a backward, ignorant old man. He does not even thank Jefferson for removing the boot until Jefferson

first asks, "That feel any better?" When Jefferson first mentions getting Todd to a doctor, Todd instead orders Jefferson to "help me up...into the ship." When Jefferson objects that Todd's ankle is too badly broken, Todd over-rides his objection with an assertive "Give me your arm!" Todd then clutches the old man's arm to pull himself up, thinking he could "never make him understand." Once up, Todd expresses no thanks but simply says, "Now, let's see." Then, rather than asking for support, he "push[es] the old man back." As he sways giddily, Jefferson tells him "You best sit down" but Todd stubbornly asserts "No, I'm okay." He entirely ignores Jefferson's warning, "You mess with that ankle they have to cut your foot off." Finally, unable to walk because of the pain, Todd "allowed them to help him down with a pang of despair" but without a word of appreciation. When Jefferson again mentions a doctor, this time saying that they will get a doctor for him (implying that they will fetch a doctor), Todd does not reply but merely thinks of his own bad luck. Perhaps because of their having received no reply to that offer, the boy suggests taking Todd to town on one of the oxen, an offer which Todd rejects, to which rejection Jefferson simply replies simply "aw" and then sends the boy for Graves.

In my opinion, this resigned "aw" of Jefferson's is the first turning-point in the story: it is the point at which Jefferson effectively turns Todd over to Graves. Support for this interpretation comes from the sequence of events just described here in the preceding paragraph and from the fact that the expression "aw" occurs in only two other places in the story. The next one is uttered by Todd when he was a child trying to ask his mother to get him an airplane but afraid to say so outright. He simply says, "Aw, Mama, mama, you know..." (p.164). The last usage of "aw" occurs when Todd, after seeing what might be the search plane turn away, asks Jefferson where he had sent the boy. Jefferson tells him that he sent the boy to Mister Graves, the man that owns the land they are on. Todd pushes on with another question:

> "Do you think he phoned?"
>
> Jefferson looked at him quickly.
>
> "Aw sho. Dabney Graves is got a bad name on accounta them killings, but he'll call though..."

The one-line paragraph preceding Jefferson's "aw" is emphasized here above. It is noteworthy because there are very few one-line, non-dialogue paragraphs in this story, the entire list being the following:

> Something within [Todd] uncoiled. It was a Negro sound. (p.147; the opening page)
>
> [Todd] saw the boy leave, running. (p.151; end of the opening section)
>
> This is a new turn, Todd thought. What's he driving at? (p.158; when Todd begins to suspect that Jefferson may be making fun of him)
>
> Jefferson looked at [Todd] quickly. (p.167; given above)
>
> They drew back, surprised. (p.171; after Todd tells the attendant not to touch him)
>
> Todd was beyond it now, lost in a world of anguish. (p.172; after Graves says that Todd must get off his land, "dead or alive")

As a collection, this sequence of one-line paragraphs is itself poetically structured, having "Todd" as the subject of the first three instances and the last instance, with a shift in subject in penultimate position, the shift being towards Jefferson, who appears first pronominally as "he" line internally, and then fully represented as "Jefferson" and then again in the inclusive pronominal "they" (exclusive, though, in the sense that it does not include Todd).

It would appear that the combination of Jefferson's looking at Todd "quickly" followed by the expression "aw sho" suggests that Jefferson is quite certain that Graves will not phone the airfield. But in trying to appear nonchalant, yet certain, Jefferson reveals that Graves is a very dangerous man...perhaps as dangerous as his cousin Rudolph. As Todd learns more about Graves, he experiences "the sensation of being caught in a white neighborhood after dark" (p. 168). The line of inquiry that follows leads to Jefferson's self-exposing description of his hatred of the man. That in turn is soon followed by the story's longest paragraph, spread out over three pages (pp.168-170), a 40-line two-part paragraph with, as will be seen here, a significant transitional sentence.

The paragraph begins with Todd wishing the pain in his ankle would ease up. He then thinks, "the closer I spin toward the earth the blacker I become." With sweat running into his eyes, he first thinks he will never see the plane again, and then he tries to see Jefferson, but he imagines him to be holding a miniature Jefferson in his hand, and that the miniature Jefferson is laughing while the larger Jefferson looks on with detachment. Then there is a transitional sentence, rather than a paragraph break:

> Then Jefferson looked up from the thing in his hand and turned to speak but Todd was far away, searching the sky for a plane in a hot dry land on a day and age he had long forgotten. (p. 169)

The second part of the paragraph relates a childhood memory of printed fliers being dropped from a plane, the fliers saying "Niggers Stay from the Polls." The paragraph ends with

> ...above [Todd] saw the plane spiraling gracefully agleam in the sun like a fiery sword. And seeing it soar he was caught, transfixed between a terrible horror and a horrible fascination. (p. 170)

In that paragraph, which itself is in two parts, linked by a sentence that contains both Jefferson and Todd, but with Jefferson in the foreground and Todd disappearing into the past, Todd unconsciously comes to realize the ambiguity and ambivalence of life and people. He sees the larger Jefferson holding, and containing, in a detached manner, the smaller Jefferson that shakes with laughter. He also is mesmerized by the plane which is both alluring in its mechanical complexity and its grace but horrible in its potential to be the instrument of terror.

VI. Conclusion

As has been shown here, a systematic and documented reading of Ralph Ellison's story "Flying

Home," suggests that the "established" interpretation, as presented by Callahan and O'Meally, who conclude that Todd is "rescued" by Jefferson, is vulnerable to a radically different understanding. Well-supported linguistic analysis of the structure of the text (including imposition of an organizational framework and analysis of types of paragraphs, and function of italics, pronouns, nouns, and various lexical and syntactic constructions), along with inventorying of images of death, violence, and darkness, strongly favors the interpretation that Todd's most likely salvation is death, either at the hands of Rudolph or, perhaps even, Jefferson.

Appendix One

A sectionalized summary of "Flying Home"

The following summary presents the story as here divided into four sections. The text itself is not divided into sections, with the exception of one story-internal section which is here labeled "Todd." That section, which is here considered to be the third section, is typographically distinct in that it is set entirely in italics. Moreover, it is separated from the rest of the text by intervening blank lines. (That italicized section also ends with a three-line chant or incantation (or admonition), which is similarly off-set by an intervening blank line.) The four sections are here assigned the labels Opening, Jefferson, Todd, and Graves, and in this summary, page and line-number information is given within parentheses following the respective label. Also provided is a listing of the participants who appear in that section, as well as a list of specific persons who are referred to. (Section one shows the name Jefferson in parentheses because that name does not appear until section two; in sections three and four, the ending "-erson" is within parentheses because Jefferson is also addressed as "Jeff" within those two sections.)

The source referred to is the version of the story in Callahan 1996, pp. 147-173, which presents the story in 799 lines (including the three blank lines). In that version, the initial page has 12 lines of text (excluding the title), the final page with 6 lines of text, and the intervening pages each have 31 lines of text (excepting pages 148-9, 156-7, and 164-5, each of which has 32 lines of text). The last line of the first, opening, section is the first line of page 151, the next line beginning what is labeled here the second section, "Jefferson." The third section, "Todd," which is entirely in italic type, begins on line 19 of page 162, with line 18 being blank, separating that section from the preceding part of the story. The contiguous lines of that third section end with line 23 of page 166; line 24 on that page is blank, and the next three lines contain the three-line chant, followed by another blank line. The fourth section thus begins on page 166 with line 29, which, however, is in italics but also within quotation marks (the only instance of italics within quotation marks outside of the dialogue entries within section three). The twenty-second line of page 155 apparently is incorrectly set in type and should begin with the words "They bad luck" rather than "They had luck."

The mid-point of the story occurs within Section 2. The exact midpoint is Todd's request that Jefferson cease telling his tale. However, Jefferson persists with his story, with the result being that the structural midpoint in terms of peak intensity occurs one page later.

1. Opening (pp.147 to top line of 151; total 108 lines); participants: Todd, old man (Jefferson), Teddy (reference to: [Todd's] girl, Mister Graves, an ox named Ned)

The second word of the first paragraph is the name Todd, though that name does not occur again until the middle of the next page. The voices of the yet-unnamed Jefferson and Teddy appear in italics near the end of the first paragraph, indicating that their speech "came to [Todd] dimly." Following that

paragraph are four one-line paragraphs, three being dialogue entries of speech between the old man and the boy. The sixth paragraph, comprising 12 lines, is a narrative description of Todd and his thoughts, briefly relating that he had been piloting a tailspinning plane, had landed it in a field, had fallen from the cockpit, had experienced the breaking of a bone or bones, and was at the moment looking into the faces of "an old Negro man and a boy." The fact that Todd is also a Negro is implied in the opening paragraph, but is not explicitly stated until page 150 in a 25-line paragraph that began on the preceding page. That paragraph contains Todd's recollection of "his girl's last letter" in which she specifically states "you're black, Todd," in the context of writing about Negroes being taught to fly but not being sent to war to fight. In the opening section, the old man removes the boot from Todd's injured leg, and tries to persuade Todd to let them get him to a doctor. Todd, however, refuses to cooperate with the old man, stating simply, "I have orders not to leave the ship." The opening section then ends with the old man, in response, telling the boy "Teddy" to go and get "Mister Graves." Todd immediately objects, suspecting that Graves may be white, and asks that Graves only be asked to contact the airfield, "...please. They'll take care of the rest." No verbal response comes from either the old man or from Teddy, but the next, and last, paragraph of this section (as identified and labeled here) is the one-line description, "[Todd] saw the boy leave, running."

2. *Jefferson* (pp. 151 to 162, line 17; total 359 lines); participants: Todd, Jeff(erson)

(reference to: [Todd's] father, Mister Rudolph, Mister Graves, Teddy; Jefferson's story-telling reference to Jonah and Saint Peter)

In this section, Todd and the old man are alone, waiting for help to arrive. After a two-line dialogue between the two men, in which Todd learns that the boy will probably go about a mile before reaching his destination, there are three prose paragraphs (17, 38, and 2 lines in length), detailing Todd's thoughts and his frustration at being dependent on the old man and the boy when there was "a perfectly good radio" in the plane that was useless because Todd could not get to it. Todd's thoughts meander among his feelings about technology and flying, his resentment of black men who could not fully appreciate his achievements, his fear and apprehension of the judgment of his white officers, and a recalled sense of betrayal when he had learned as a child that his father was dead. The two men then talk about the plane, but when the old man brings up the subject of Negroes not yet being allowed to fight, Todd gets tense, though he does not respond verbally. The old man tells Todd about having learned just that morning that Graves' cousin Mister Rudolph, who was "liable to kill somebody," had escaped from the insane asylum and that people were in the neighborhood looking for him. Todd's thoughts wander off to the buzzard that had crashed into the plane. The old man, who tells Todd that Teddy calls buzzards "jimcrows," nearly makes Todd sick by telling him about having seen two buzzards fly up from the belly of a dead horse. The old man also tells Todd that "white folks round here don't like to see you boys up there in the sky." Then the old man pulls Todd out of his reverie by telling a tall tale about having died and gone to heaven, growing wings, being required to wear a

restrictive harness (which he refused to wear) because he was black, and then being cast out of heaven for reckless flying. It is within that story that Jefferson addresses himself by name. Todd gets upset at Jefferson's joke, and ends up screaming at him, "Why do you laugh at me this way?" Shortly afterwards, however, he mumbles an apology and then feels "the embarrassed silence of understanding flutter between them." That feeling is only momentary, however, for soon "the screen of pain" separates them, and Todd begins a long, italicized reflection on his childhood fascination with planes.

3. ***Todd*** (flashback in italics, pp. 162-166; total 134 lines); participants in dialogue: [Todd] (identified only pronominally or addressed as "boy" or "chile" by the mother, and "young man" by the grandmother), Mama, grandma (reference to: uncle, mother (addressed as "Mama" in dialogue)

Through Todd's flashback, the reader learns how young Todd had first seen a plane as a toy model at the state fair, and how later, while apparently suffering from the distortions of a fever, the young boy tried to catch a real plane, thinking it was another toy plane that escaped from some white boy. Young Todd had climbed up a screen at home in order to get high enough to reach the plane, but he slipped and fell from the screen, had his breath knocked out, and then "lay there bawling." Hearing the commotion, his mother rushed out of the house, but when she saw the real plane, she told her son to "come in this house before somebody else sees what a fool" he had been. The doctor, who was called to the house, explained to her that the boy's mind was all right, but that he had been suffering from a fever for several hours. In his delirium, Todd continually sees the plane "flying just beyond [his] fingertips" and hears his grandmother's warning, "Young man, young man/Yo arm's too short/To box with God...."

4. ***Graves*** (pp.166-173; total 195 lines); participants: Todd, Jeff(erson), and later Darby Graves, two attendants, and Teddy (reference to: Rudolph)

The last section begins immediately after the italicized three-line incantation of the grandmother. It begins, with the italicized words "Hey, son!" breaking into Todd's reverie as Jefferson tries to draw Todd's attention to an airplane flying over a distant field. Jefferson asks if it is from the airfield, sent out to find Todd. As the plane turns away, Todd tells Jefferson "'Maybe he saw us'," but then "[Todd] thought, with despair, maybe he didn't even see us." Then Todd asks, perhaps having forgotten, where Jefferson had sent the boy. Jefferson then tells Todd about Graves, who owns the land and who killed "five fellers" and adds "Eve'body knows 'bout Dabney Graves, especially the colored. He done killed enough of us." Jefferson then goes on to tell how Graves is always joking, can be "mean as hell," but will also "turn right around and back the colored against the white." Jefferson tells Todd that he himself "hates" Graves and "stays out of his way 'cause down here that's what you gotta do." Todd then drifts off into another pain-induced delirium, first thinking about Jefferson and then about his mother and airplane-dropped fliers with the words "Niggers Stay from the Polls." It is late afternoon when Teddy and three men arrive, Graves and two white-dressed attendants (apparently from the insane asylum). They put Todd into a "straitjacket" and onto a stretcher. One of

the attendants then argues with Graves, saying that Todd is not crazy but is sick and in need of a doctor, and implies that Graves led the two men astray while still roaming at large is Rudolph, who is "liable to kill somebody. White folks or niggers don't make no difference." Graves insists that Todd is crazy on the evidence that Todd was flying a plane. As Todd looks up to see Graves' face, feeling that "all the unnamed horror and obscenities...he had ever imagined stood materialized before him," he realizes that one of the attendants is reaching out to him. Todd suddenly commands sharply, "Don't put your hands on me!" Grave responds by kicking Todd in the chest. When Todd recovers his wind, he further surprises the others by bursting out in wild laughter. As his laughter subsides, he hears Jefferson tell Graves "the army done tole him not to leave his airplane." Graves responds by telling Jefferson and Teddy to carry "this here black eagle over to that nigguh airfield and leave him." The sun is setting as the men depart the field, "the white men walking ahead as Jefferson and the boy carried [Todd] along in silence."

Appendix Two
Abbreviated procedures of analysis

Processing the text initially involves analyzing the text on the basis of "form" (typographic/format features) and "content" for the purpose of determining a structure (or outline) that enables meaningful categorization of the identifiable features of the written text. Although this procedure may be criticized as circular, it is rather a method of verification of the appropriateness of both the interpretation imposed on the text and the selection of features used to support that interpretation: if either is inappropriate, the resultant incongruity itself suggests that a different interpretation should be constructed or that there has been a failure in the identification or tabulation of suitable features, features which ought to support the targeted interpretation. That is, interpretation both results from the structural analysis and is supported by that analysis, as it informs and guides that analysis.

In the procedure used here, analysis of the text involves (1) establishment of an indexical framework and segmentation according to orthographic and non-orthographic features and (2) identification and classification of linguistic units according to marked phonological, lexical or syntactic features. The category "orthographic features" includes formatting and typography (fonts and punctuation); the category "non-orthographic features" includes more typically linguistic material such as the author's stylistic selection of the lexicon, temporal indicators, etc., and includes "content" matter such as temporal/geographic location, presence/absence of the "actors" in the story, etc. As mentioned earlier, the reader here is directed to Lupardus 2002 for further explanation of methodology; however, it should be mentioned that the specific features used for establishment of an indexical framework necessarily vary somewhat according to the corpus of the text. For instance, in

Lupardus 2002, which dealt with Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Minister's Black Veil," the limited occurrence of dialogue there, in contrast to the extensive and dominant presence of dialogue in "Flying Home," resulted in a different presentation of the indexical framework, though there are some similarities in the classification of format/typographical features. On the other hand, Hawthorne's and Ellison's short stories are both appropriately analyzed according to a dramatic framework. As for what constitutes a "marked" linguistic feature, repetition and reoccurrence of a form, or by contrast the rarity and uniqueness of a form, can make that linguistic form "marked" or noteworthy. Similarly, co-occurrence with, or close proximity to, other marked features can serve to highlight and therefore "mark" a particular linguistic form (i.e. grammatical unit or stylistic unit).

If the major divisions of the indexical framework have been appropriately selected, analysis of smaller segments, such as paragraphs and lexical items, should provide fruitful results that reinforce the suitability of the selected indexical framework. In general, typographical divisionary features such as headings, blanks pages or spaces between portions of text, and indentations are indicators of notable divisions. However, other typographical features such as the presence of italics and quotations marks, can contribute to categorization of major divisions of the story. On the other hand, semantic correlation of syntactic material (such as syntactic and lexical constructions) cannot be ignored in the establishment of an indexical framework.

Details of the framework selection for "Flying Home" are included in Appendix One, which presents a summary of the story.

Appendix Three
Images and expressions of death

There are a number of images that directly, indirectly, or metaphorically are associated with death (or termination), other than the name Graves, or are indicative of danger. They will be briefly presented here in order of appearance (some with minimal explanation in parentheses) and identified by page number. The instances (in terms of sentences, noting that some sentences may contain more than one such image) are grouped under the four labeled sections. Where there is more than one instance on a page, those instances are separated here by a virgule. The number of instances is provided in parentheses after each section label.

A summary and tabulation of expressions follows this section-categorized listing.

(1) *Opening* (five instances)

Blackness washed over [Todd], like infinity / [Todd] turned, seeing...where the buried blade of of a plow marked the end of a furrow (p. 149); With a pang he remembered his girl's last letter / "...they keep beating that dead horse...." / "I have orders not to leave the ship...." (by implication, the captain goes down with his ship) (p. 150).

(2) *Jefferson* (twenty instances)

...the abandoned shell of a locust (p. 151); ...as a child he grew to discover that his father was dead / Under some sealed orders, ... his path curved swiftly away.... / ... he knew but one point of landing and there he would receive his wings / ... the enemy would appreciate his skill and he would assume his deepest meaning.... (p. 152); "It's as good a way to fight and die as I know" (p. 153); ..there was something sinister about the conversation, ... he was flying unwillingly into unsafe and uncharted regions / "[Rudolph] liable to kill somebody" (p. 154); "...remembering how the blood and feathers had sprayed back against the hatch. It had been as though he had flown into a storm of blood and blackness" / "They [buzzards] after dead things. Don't eat nothing what's alive" / "A little bit more and he would have made a meal out of me," Todd said grimly. (by association, the Grim Reaper—a symbol of death) / "... two old jimcrows come flying right up outa that hoss's insides!" (p. 155); "Sho, I died and went to heaven...maybe by the time I tell you about it they be done come after you" (by implication, "as they (the angels) came for me") (p. 156); "...when I was dead." (p. 157); "...I caused a storm and a coupla lynchings down here..." (p. 158); Saint Peter (he guards the gates of heaven) (pp. 159 and 160); ...an intense humiliation that only great violence would wash...away (p. 160); "...a bunch of buzzards feeding on a dead horse" / "...he would strangle this old man." (p. 161); "...shoot you for a crow?" (p. 162)

(3) *Todd* (one instance)

"...I'm gon wham the living daylight out of you..." (p. 164)

(4) *Graves* (fourteen instances)

"Dabney Graves is got a bad name on accounta them killings...." / "He done killed enough of us" (p. 167); Todd had the sensation of being caught in a white neighborhood after dark / "...then turn right around and have you strung up" (p. 168); ...a frightened face frantically beckoning from a cracked door.... (p. 169); ...the eyeless sockets of a white hood.... / ...agleam in the sun like a fiery sword / ...caught, transfixed between a terrible horror and a horrible fascination (p. 170);

"...Rudolph liable to kill somebody" / ...a half-dead fly.... / He thought...he would laugh himself to death (p. 171); "...dead or alive...." (p. 172); ...he waited for the horror to seize him again / ...he...saw the dark bird glide into the sun and glow like a bird of flaming gold (sunset, metaphorically a termination) (p. 173)

Tabulation of occurrences of specific expressions, listed by category and section (variant forms are entered preceding the page number)

15 Instances of expressions dead/death, die, kill, bury

7 dead (Section 1 (p150*); Section 2 (p152, p154, p157, p161*); Section 4 (p171, p172) (asterisks mark collocation "dead horse")

1 death Section 4 (p171)

2 die Section 1 (p153; died p156)

4 kill Section 1 (p154); Section 4 (killings p.167, killed p167, p171)

1 bury Section 1 (buried p149)

4 instances of expressions indicating form/method of killing

1 lynchings Section 2 (p158)

1 strangle Section 2 (p161)

1 shoot Section 2 (p162)

1 strung up Section 4 (p168)

2 instances of expressions indicating knife-type instrument

1 blade Section 1 (p149)

1 sword Section 4 (p170)

4 instances of expression blood/blackness

2 blood Section 1 (p155, p155)

2 blackness Section 1 (p149); Section 2 (p155)

4 instances of miscellaneous references to violence

2 storm Section 2 (storm of blood and blackness p155, storm and a coupla lynchings p158)

1 violence Section 2 (p160)

1 wham the living daylight out of Section 3 (p164)

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to numerous individuals for inspiration and encouragement. First, of course, to my colleague Masatsugu Oitate for introducing to me the story by Ralph Ellison, originally through the abstract of a paper he had written, and for making available to me the literary sources I have referred to here (Ralph Ellison, Flying Home and Other Stories, edited and with an Introduction by John F. Callahan, New York: Random House (1996); Valerie Smith, Lea Baechler, and A. Walton Litz (editors), African American Writers, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons (1991)). Also I wish to thank a former colleague, Mikio Shiroma, for introducing me to the broad area of American literature twenty years ago. For help with the computer, I owe special thanks to my current student Fumiaki Uehara and a former student, Reza Shams, and the office secretaries, Saori Chinen and Keiko Arakaki. For extending additional time to me, I must either thank (or curse?) my colleagues Minoru Arakaki and Shigeru Takamiyagi. For beer and sympathy, I thank Mieko Arakaki. Others will remain unnamed because their influence has been less professional but no less important. Errors and shortcomings here, of course, are the result of my own ignorance and deficiencies, yet I welcome comments and criticism.

The reference to Lupardus 2002 is to a structural analysis of Hawthorne's "The Minister's Black Veil" in volume six, number one of this journal. (Abstract: 新垣 實)